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ABSTRACT

A model for adult language learning is developed based on the postulates that language is semiotic, contextual, communicative, and cultural. Research in psycholinguistics has discovered that a cognitive and recognitional knowledge of language underlies and is greater than performative language. The move from the first level, the semantic base, to the operational layer is a function of grammatical, phonological, and semantic patterning. The semantic patterning is a building up of semantic networks in which lexical concepts are connected among themselves by various types of relational ties, such as taxonomic, content, part-to-whole, function, material, historical, and cultural. It can be shown that the higher one goes on the grammatical and phonological hierarchies, the more generalized is the contextual meaning, and the more specific is the lexical meaning. In the semantic hierarchy, the story level is where cultural meaning predominates and so would be the lowest level for initiating new language learning. According to the model, classroom teaching would have two procedures and related goals: laying the pre-semantic base by immersing students in the language through use of culturally relevant stories, and providing a variety of objective and subjective focusing activities requiring activity on the part of students. It is claimed that use of the model will enable students to become competent in useful linguistic and situational contexts. (AMH)

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SEMANTIC NETWORK MODEL FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Richard D. Davidian

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INTRODUCTION

Much contemporary thought and research has been focused on integrative and affective (Stevick 1976) considerations of language learning. A popular movement in the discipline today proposes a 'natural approach' to classroom methodology (Krashen 1978, Terrell 1980). One of the important goals of the natural method is that the 'students be able to communicate' (Terrell 1980:130), and utilizing the 'communicative skills' is basic to the theory and methodology. Great emphasis therefore is put on the learning of meaning (Terrell 1980:130). In a sister discipline, cognitive anthropology bridges the gap between anthropology and linguistics by viewing cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge as inseparable. Keesing (1979:21) says that 'awkwardness will be repeated over and over again in a lexicon if we separate linguistic knowledge from the cultural knowledge presupposed by it.' This implies a semantic bridge between language and culture which must not be ignored in language learning. From his own experience and research on Malaita, Solomon Islands, he says that 'competence to communicate in the conservative communities of the Kwaio mountains depends on a complex hierarchy of cultural knowledge (Keesing 1979:33). As with the 'natural approach' to language learning, so with communication in a foreign culture, meaning, here cultural meaning, is basic.

Not only is an understanding of the culture essential to the complete understanding of the language, but knowing the language is the key to understanding the culture. Those who are unaware of or ignore this relationship and who try to function in a foreign culture too often find themselves disoriented and alienated, victims of culture shock. Schumann (1978:167) says that culture shock can 'produce a powerful syndrome of rejection which diverts energy and attention from second language learning'. He fails, however, to show that language learning, rather than being the victim of culture shock, can be its conqueror. Larson and Smalley (1972:3), on the other hand, take the positive side of the relationship, language learning, and put it among 'the forces which can help (the alien) to find a place in his new community'. The book which they co-authored, Becoming Bilingual (1972), is dedicated to that goal of helping the person who wants to make a contribution in a foreign culture to overcome alienation and culture shock by giving him useful tools for learning the language of the new culture.

The theoretical model which I have tried to formulate in this paper is based on the philosophy and many of the same principles which undergird Larson and Smalley's book as well as the work they are presently doing teaching adults language learning skills. I believe that adults can learn language if given the proper language learning tools, and that it is essential for them to learn the language of a new culture if they want to begin to feel comfortable in it and make any significant contribution to the members of that culture. This is true whether he is an anthropologist, a businessman, a linguist, a missionary, a diplomat, an agriculturalist, a teacher or whatever profession which may take him into a foreign culture.

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This paper, then, deals with language learning as an aid in becoming communicative in a foreign culture. It's emphasis is on the theoretical aspects of learning meaning and the section on the application of the model to the classroom is not at all exhaustive. I have deliberately chosen to use the classroom teaching situation for this application, although the model fits the situation as well where a learner wishes to work with a language helper outside of any classroom.

BASIC POSTULATES

This semantic model for language learning is based on the following postulates:

1. Language is semiotic.
2. Language is contextual.
3. Language is communicative.
4. Language is cultural.

As we look at each of these postulates, the later the model and its application, it must be kept in mind that the broad theoretical foundation is tagmemic.

Semiotic: Language is a system of symbols, complicated networks of signs bound to their meanings, layered and embedded on multiple levels of the phonological, grammatical and referential hierarchies (Pike and Pike 1977:3). The semiotic nature of language is so basic that the discipline of linguistics has largely been founded on this fact. Weinreich (1980:3) says that 'specialized research into natural human language--the semiotic phenomenon par excellence (emphasis mine)--constitutes linguistics'.

Beekman and Callow (1979:1) define a linguistic sign as 'any form-meaning composite'. This plus the demand that form and meaning remain intact in linguistic analysis (Pike and Pike 1977:142) is crucial to this postulate as well as to the model and its application.

Contextual: Semiotic bits (morphemes) combine into words, phrases, sentences and ever larger chunks establishing part-whole relationships to form a hierarchy of contexts: the morpheme is in the context of the word, the word is in the context of the phrase and so forth until the discourse is reached. Not only is there this grammatical hierarchy resting on the morpheme, but a phonological and a referential hierarchy are intertwined with it to form a stream of speech (Pike and Pike 1977:365). But this stream of speech is in an even larger context: the context of the human producer of this speech act and the cultural uses to which he wishes to put it.

Communicative: Of what use, however, is a stream of speech where there is only one person? None. So to think of language in terms of less than two persons is absurd. Now that we have brought two people into the linguistic picture, we can think of the stream of speech as something functional--a message. One person is the speaker who encodes a message for the second person and the second person decodes the same message, and then he will likely respond by encoding a message of his own (Widdowson 1978:144).

Cultural: Now with at least two people involved in communication, we have a socio-cultural context for language. Anthropologists have not found a human society or culture which does not have a language. Language is intrinsic to society and culture. Language is in the concrete expression of the cognitive part of culture called worldview and which binds culture together by giving it integrative meaning. And so language and culture come together at the point where cultural meaning and linguistic meaning (semantics) meet. This interface has been aptly described by Keesing (1979:15) in these terms:

> A culture is a system of knowledge, a composite of the cognitive systems more or less shared by members of a society. It is not a way of life: it is not a system of behavior. Linguistic knowledge is thus part of, and on the same epistemological plane as, cultural knowledge.

Thus language is a part of culture and culture is an important part of language. The two cannot be separated from each other and the glue which sticks them together is meaning. And so I attempt to formulate a model for language learning in the context of 'all those principles of human nature without which language itself could not exist (Pike 1978:9).

THE SEMANTIC NETWORK MODEL

The discussion of the model will be divided into two basic parts. First I will talk about the 'semantic base' which is a cognitive linguistic storehouse in the learner and secondly I will discuss 'semantic networks' which function within the semantic base.

Semantic base: Psycholinguistics within the past decade has carried out much research on how children acquire language (Brown 1973, Hatch 1978). An interesting discovery has been that children do not learn the small bits first and then add to them to make and use larger and larger chunks of language. Hatch (1978:137) says:

> Our basic premise has long been that the child learns some basic set of syntactic structures, moving from one-word phase to a two-word phase to more complex structures, and that eventually the child is able to put these structures together in order to carry on conversations with others. The premise, if we use discourse analysis, is the converse. That is, language learning, even at one- and two-word stages, evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations.

If a child is learning 'how to carry on conversations' but is only producing fragments of sentences, this implies that there is a much broader linguistic base in his mind than is revealed in his speech.

Adults have a two-layered semantic base with the lower layer being broader than the upper one (see Figure 1). For the majority of adults who never completely stop learning their first language, the emphasis is mainly on the lexicon. In increasing vocabulary, more often than not, words are learned without recourse to a dictionary. They are learned in context and over a period of time and only after several encounters. First the adult learns to recognize a word in

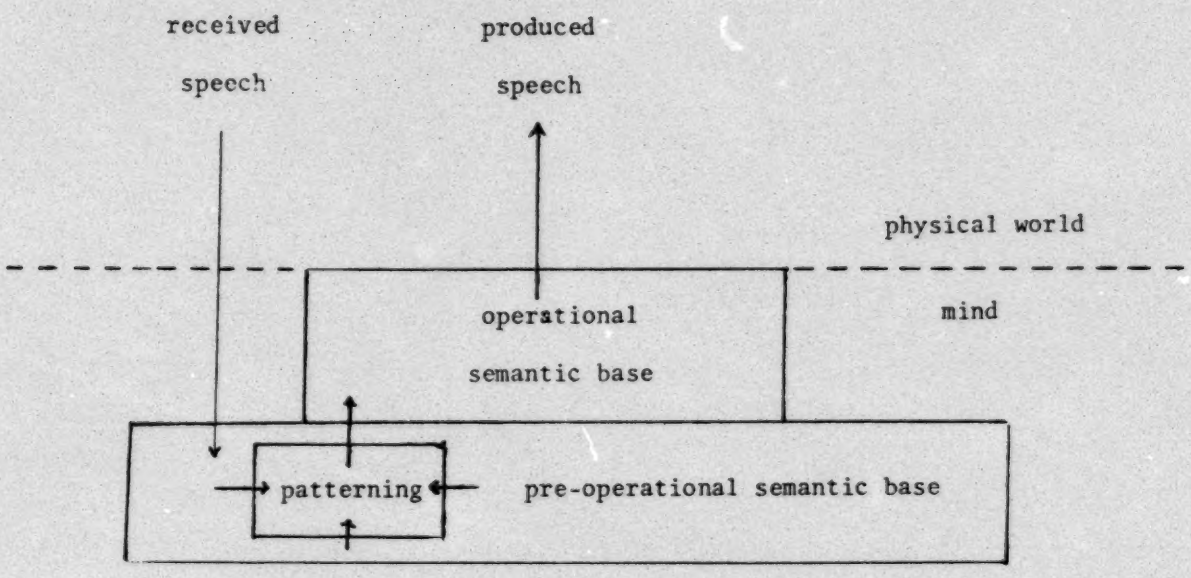

Figure 1: DOUBLE-LAYERED SEMANTIC BASE

context with only a vague idea of its meaning. Later the meaning becomes freer and freer of the immediate context and finally, one day he finds a context of his own choosing in which to use the word. When the learner has taken into his mind a new vocabulary word, whether visually or aurally, it enters what I call the pre-operational layer of the semantic base. Later when he is confident and competent to use it in a personal context, it has moved up into the operational layer of the semantic base.

With both the child and the adult in learning their first language, the pre-operational layer of the semantic base is broader than the operational layer. What this means is that, with all of us, our cognitive and recognitional knowledge of language is greater than our performative language. Miller (1978:62) uses the term 'mental lexicon' in describing the same thing:

> It is generally assumed that much--perhaps the most important part-- of the mental lexicon is a passive store available for use by the more active components of the information processing systems involved in language use. Although new words can be acquired and seldom-used words forgotton, for most purposes the mental lexicon is thought of as a fixed data base.

In a later section, we will look at how these principles can be applied to second-language acquisition.

Networks: The move up from the pre-operational layer of the semantic base to the operational layer is a function of patterning. Although patterning can be grammatical and phonological, especially in children and learners of a second language, semantic patterning is basic to these two cases as well as to the adult who continues to learn his first language. Semantic patterning, which we will deal with in this paper, is building up semantic networks in which lexical concepts are connected with other lexical concepts to form relational meaning networks (see Figure 2).

Concepts are connected by relational ties of varying types. The following are just a few of the possibilities:

1. taxonomic: e.g. house-building or house-bungalow
2. content: e.g. house-family or house-furniture
3. part-whole: e.g. house-window, house-roof or house-foundation
4. function: e.g. house-visit or house-live
5. material: e.g. house-bricks
6. historical: e.g. house-Whitehouse
7. cultural: e.g. house-igloo, house-hut or house-longhouse

In #1 the taxonomy can be ascending (as in the case of the house as a type of building) or descending (as in the case of the bungalow as a type of house). The content relation in #2 can be the family which occupies the house, but also the furniture. In #7, types of houses in different cultures are connected to the core concept 'house' with a cultural relational tie.

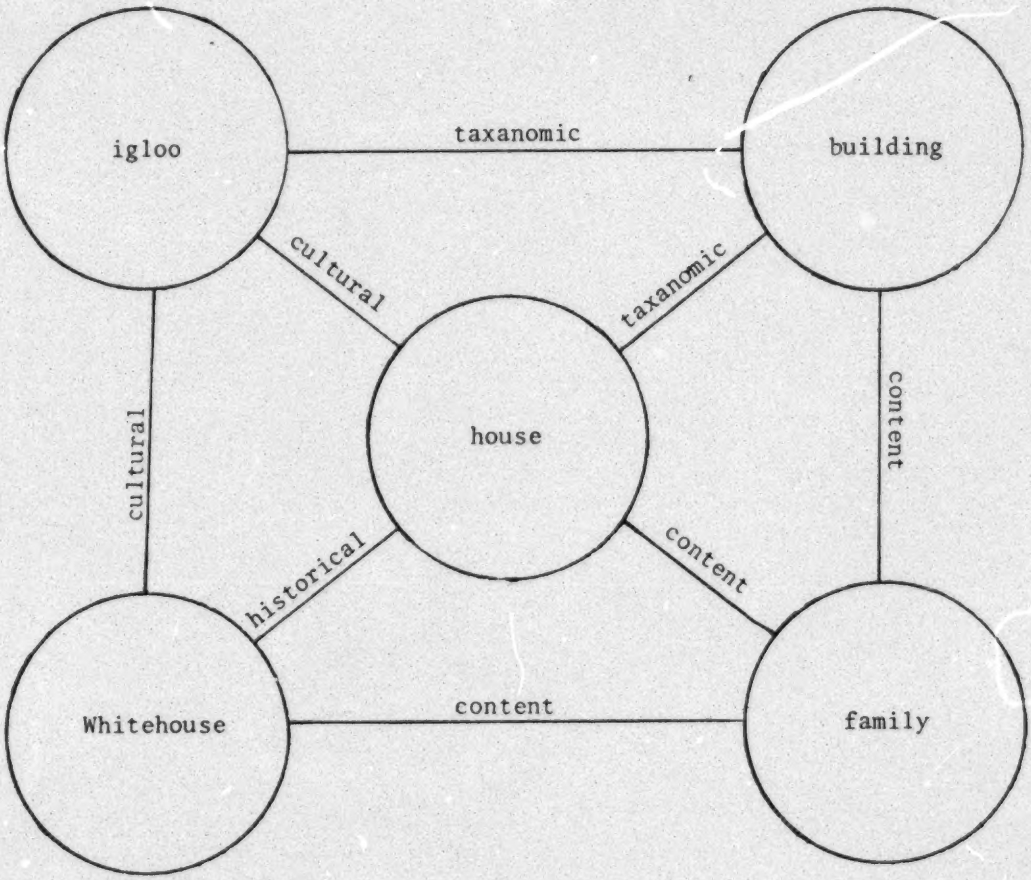

Figure 2: SEMANTIC NETWORK

Aside from lexical relationships, there can also be grammatical and phonological relationships. For instance, if the learner memorizes the sentence 'His house is the one on the corner', the position of 'house' in the sentence gives a syntagmatic tie with the other elements of the sentence and oral repetition of the sentence, especially with proper intonation, ties the phonological word into the larger matrices of the phonological phrase and sentence. Rhyme can tie a lexical concept to another lexical concept, e.g. house-mouse, and another grammatical relational tie as paradigmatic where the core concept is one among a set of filler classes which can function in a particular grammatical slot (cf. Pike and Pike 1977:2).

Concepts acquire semantic hooks, one for each relational tie with another concept. We will see in the next few paragraphs how these hooks function in stabilizing and mobilizing roles for the benefit of network patterning.

Stability: A concept becomes more and more stable according to the number of semantic hooks it has to latch onto other concepts and form networks. If it hooks only to one other thing, it can swing around and move unrestrained within the semantic base. Connected to two other lexical items, it can only swing one way. With three connections, it has already become quite stable and the more hooks and semantic relations with other concepts it has, the more stable it is.

Mobility: Ironically, the more stable the concept becomes, the more functionally mobile it can be. Functional mobility is the characteristic of a concept which allows it to break out of one context and move to function in another. For instance, a learner may know the concept 'how' in the sentence 'How do you do?' as a greeting. It is stable as long as it is in this context, tied syntagmatically and phonologically, but is not mobile because it cannot function in any other. It does not have the semantic hooks to tie it into other contexts. When the learner knows how to break it out of this context and use it in 'How big is it?' and 'Didn't he know how to drive?', then 'how' has become a much more functionally mobile concept. A concept does not loose stability when it becomes functionally mobile because it maintains its hooks with which to hook into other networks. A non-functionally mobile concept can easily move about, but because it lacks semantic hooks, it cannot stabilize in other networks and semantic contexts.

Hierarchies and the Cultural Context: To get a clearer idea of how culture works as the context for language and language learning, we must take a closer look at the three linguistic hierarchies: the grammatical, the phonological and the referential. The closer to the top of these hierarchies we come, the deeper we get into cultural meanings.

To illustrate, let us first look at the grammatical hierarchy. The morpheme has potential as a semiotic carrier of cultural meaning, but very little relative to the potential of the word. Lexical items are loaded with cultural overtones (Kolers 1973:283-284), but they are not semantically stable as long as they are out of context. Single words, especially nouns and verbs, are too polysemous and give us all

kinds of trouble, so much so that according to George Miller (1978: 97-98) polysemy, although once considered to be 'the central problem for linguistic studies of semantics', has been neglected by 'much recent work in semantics'. Marginal constituents of the noun phrase such as specifiers and adjectives, although they may enhance grammatical stability, add little to semantic stability.

Not until we get to the level of the clause with its case relationships between the verb and its nouns (Longacre 1980:215) do we really increase the semantic stability of a particular lexical item such as a noun. So the level of the clause or sentence is really the lowest level where we find a dramatic increase of semantic stability. Miller (1978:62) says this about it:

> In order to explore how such diverse information might be integrated and represented in the memories of language users, it is needed most immediately to produce and understand sentences, so lexical information must be represented in a manner compatible with what people know about the syntax and semantics of sentences in their language. Sometimes even this larger sentential context is insufficient; for a broader view of how lexical information is used it would be necessary to consider the texts and discourses into which sentences can enter. At this level one begins to glimpse processes of real psychological interest--thoughts, memories, percepts, desires, feelings, intentions--as these are expressed in everyday speech.

So the higher we go up the grammatical hierarchy, the more easily we can overcome problems of polysemy. Miller (1978:97-98) gives this explanation:

> Psychologically, the remarkable fact about polysemy is how little trouble it causes...
>
> The process to be explained, therefore, is lexical disambiguation. How are people able to recognize so quickly and accurately which one or two of a large number of alternative meanings a word expresses on any particular occasion? The answer must, of course, involve the use of context: the immediate context, the discourse context, and the situation in which the communication occurs. Disambiguation probably relies also on general knowledge of the topic under discussion.

This 'general knowledge' is what Keesing (1979:30) calls 'the knowledge shared by the communicating actors' of cultural knowledge. So as contextual meaning becomes more generalized by ascending the grammatical hierarchy, the lexical meaning becomes more specific. An increase in contextual generality produces an increase in lexical particularity.

The same principle applies to the phonological hierarchy. There is meaning in the phonology, but it is much more evident on levels of the phonological sentence and above where the suprasegmentals such as intonation, rhythm and stress come into play.

The referential hierarchy, which deals with the real-world thing being talked about (Pike and Pike 1977:363), maintains a similar consistency. Events of a story convey much more cultural meaning than mere props or participants. Culture is perceived not in isolated

human beings, but rather in human beings as they relate to each other in terms of behavior and attitudes. Props such as cultural artifacts, dwellings, clothing, objects of worship or art, roads or conveyances take on cultural meaning as they function in the social context of interacting human beings. So in the referential hierarchy, the story level (Hwang 1980:257) is where cultural meaning really stands out. In my view, this level of the referential hierarchy, corresponding to the monologue level of the grammatical and the phonological hierarchies, is the minimum level for initiating any new language learning items. There is one level higher which is essential to the cultural learning of language and that is the performative interaction level (Hwang 1980:257). I will let words of Shin Ja Hwang (1980:259) describe it:

> 'Performative interaction level is represented by the whole of the discourse' (quoting from Jones 1977:109) including attitudes and beliefs, and the overall purpose for the discourse. In other words, Jones ascribes to performative-interaction-level analysis in the interaction among the author, reader, and analyst with their attitudes, beliefs, and presuppositions. However, this does not seem to be the whole picture to me. For a narrative discourse where there are social interactions among participants, we should also include in our analysis their performative interactions.

On this level are the explanation, interpretation and critique of the story which go deep into the cultural matrix of the story. Without this level, the learner will alrgely interpret the story according to his own cultural grid.

APPLICATION

After the ultimate goal of teaching cultural language, the central goal of classroom teaching of language according to this model is twofold. Part one is the laying of a broad pre-operational semantic base and part two is patterning that base into an operational base. This is accomplished by two main activities. The first is called flooding and the second is called focusing.

Flooding: The laying of a broad pre-operational semantic base (PSB) is the goal of flooding. The students are immersed in language. The phonology, the grammar and reference enter in combination into the PSB and make it broader and thicker. To make it broader, more and more varied patterns are introduced. To make it thicker, more and more similar patterns must be introduced. This is a function of focusing. The thicker the PSB the more readily patterns will transfer to the operational semantic base (OSB).

Focusing: Very little patterning will take place without focusing even with a considerable amount of flooding. Many people have spent years of their lives in a foreign culture and never learned the language. It is all about them and they are flooded with it, but without a desire to learn and to produce the necessary concentration (focus), they succeed in learning practically nothing.

There are two types of focusing: objective and subjective.

Objective focusing is an activity of the teacher and consists of drawing attention to particular items in the sea of language he has flooded the students with. This focus is on meaning and teaching meaning is a primary goal of the methodology. But without subjective focusing, cognitive concentration on the part of the student, patterning will not take place. Gary (1978:186) calls it 'active listening'. Even if the students memorize structures and mimic until they are hoarse, they will not succeed at patterning in a semantic sense. The activity of language learning must be dominated by a quest for meaning. This is the cognitive activity which forms semantic ties with other concepts to form semantic networks. Phonological and grammatical patterning remain static and lack stability and mobility which is necessary for dynamic use of the language. However, with the overlay of the semantic patterning, the forming of semantic networks which tie language into the referential 'real world', phonological and grammatical patterning may be rendered dynamic.

Pike (1977:142) talks about the form-meaning composite which must not be violated. Without meaning, the form is an empty dry shell. It has no communicative value and is thus useless to the learner.

The constant exposure (flooding) to the target language presupposes no translation. Translation makes false connections with an external system. All connections must be internal to the system to be valid. External connections distort the network. Not only that, but any time spent on another language takes time that could be spent on profitable flooding and focusing. Translation teaches nothing about the target culture and is thus inimical to intra-systemic patterning and the formulation of cultural concepts.

The learning cycle must begin at the top of the hierarchies. This may be done by telling and explaining a culturally relevant story. You may ask how you can start at the top when in telling a story you must begin an utterance by piecing bits (morphemes, phonemes and other low-level items) together to even form the first sentence of the story. It is true that that is the way we are forced to speak or write. However, we don't have to focus on low level relationships. Rather the theory requires the focus to be first on the high level meaning. In other words, as the story is being told and explained, the attention of the learners is drawn to the overall meaning of the story with its cultural implications rather than the lexical or syntactic meanings. Now, it may be true that in order to get the high level meanings across, some lexical meanings will have to be made clear. This is normal. But the initial task is not finished until the story-level meanings are clear.

Let me illustrate. The teacher wants to get across the idea of a shopping trip in a shopping mall. The story meanings focus on the concept of the shopping mall. With other methods, a precise definition may be given. In this theory, definitions in the traditional sense are not considered fruitful. Meanings are not tied to definitions but to semantic networks in cultural contexts. If the teacher could take the students (let us assume that we are talking about a beginning class in ESL) to a mall and use it as a classroom, that would be ideal, but let us assume he can't. So within the limits of his resources, the teacher must make the concept of the shopping

mall as vivid as he can to the learners.

To do this, he can use description (always in the target language), gestures, diagrams and drawings on the blackboard, pictures and anything else in the way of props. He may draw a map on the board with the school where the class is and the closest mall to the school, which many of the students may have visited. He may name the different shopping malls in the area. Then he can start describing the shops in the mall, how they are lined up on either side of a covered passage and so forth. What is going on linguistically? The students are being flooded with the target language and they are focusing on the meaning at the different levels as the teacher talks.

The phonology and the grammar are not neglected, but at first they are out of focus. Even though, they too enter the PSB and aid in patterning.

Testing is an important part of the methodology, but it can be done very informally, especially at the early stages. Total physical response is useful in the beginning when the students have not acquired very much operational language. The teacher can ask the students to point to things in the pictures, on the board or in the photographs.

The question may be asked, is there not a lot of waste in flooding? Wouldn't concentrated focusing on lower-level items be more efficient? In the early stages, this may seem true. But it has been my experience in teaching and learning languages that the dividends become evident later. The performative learning curve remains fairly flat at first but takes a dramatic upswing later on when the semantic base starts to favor the operational layer due to efficient patterning. While the laying of the pre-operational semantic base is taking place in the early stages, little operational language is evident. But the laying of a broad and thick pre-operational semantic base is not counterproductive. It gives substance to later performance.

When the story-level comprehension of meanings is acquired, the learner is ready to start down the hierarchies. As he moves down, his learning is now in the context of the story and thus culturally relevant. The form-meaning composite is respected and semantic networks are formed with generic connections to higher level networks. For instance, students learn about the shops which make up the mall and on a lower level they learn about the activities in the particular shop that the teacher may choose. When the meanings on several levels have become quite clear, the teacher may want to focus on a selected list of lexical items. A good method of doing this is to put them in sentences and have the students memorize the sentences. When this is done, the meaning remains dominant but grammar and phonology can also be focused on. These sentences should be culturally and situationally useful. In other words, the students should be able to use them in the context of coping with the culture he is trying to make a start in. In the above illustration, such sentences as 'Where is the bookstore?' and 'What is the price' are considered culturally and situationally useful and they encourage the learners to continue their language acquisition outside of the classroom.

Affect: There is much discussion about affect in present-day language learning theory. Earl Stevick (1976:48) talks about psychological meaning' in opposition to 'linguistic meaning'. Psychological meaning is the significance the language learning has with relation to how the student integrates into a group which is meaningful to him. If pronouncing a foreign language well makes the learner the object of ridicule by his classmates, then he will avoid doing it, if his standing among them has high value.

Affect is not the central thrust of this paper. However, I feel I need to lay down my ideas on it in broad terms. First of all, the model is based on the idea that the learners are motivated to become integrated into another culture and use language as the key to enter that culture. But for those students who are not so initially motivated, I believe that there are many inherent qualities in the methodology which will stimulate such motivation. In broad terms, when the learner sees that there are benefits to functioning in another culture and that learning the language can help him go a long ways toward reaching that goal, he will be motivated to concentrate on the task of leanring that language. In other words, goals of integration are aimed at the target culture instead of the learner's culture.

A number of theorists downgrade the value of correction. I give it high prominence. They say that it raises an 'affective filter' and stifles learning (Terrell 1980:130-131). I say and have proven it in my own experience that if used gently and correctly it can increase motivation. A student is inherently afraid of making mistakes because it has been traditionally attributed to inattention, laziness or some other personal deficiency. When in the classroom he can be made aware (and it may take some time in some cases) that making mistakes is an integral part of learning and that correction is positive and not negative, then the effect is in lowering the affective filter instead of raising it.

Memory and recall: Three aspects of the semantic network model favor an increase in memory length and ease of recall. The first is the learning in context. Two and a half decades ago, George Miller (1956) reported on a series of experiments dealing with human memory. The results of these experiements showed that 'the span of absolute judgement and the span of immediate memory impose severe limitations on the amount of information that we are able to receive, process, and remember!. The empirical date seemed to point to the number seven, plus or minus two, as the capacity of the human mind. To overcome these limitations, we commonly resort to 'recoding', which is grouping data into chunks, 'or groups of items that go together, until there are few enough chunks so that we can recall all the items'. Learning language in descending levels of hierarchical contexts gives the learner data which 'go together' in taxonomic or part-whole chunks which he can memorize and recall more easily (Miller 1956:95).

The second aspect of the model which favors memory and recall is the cognitive focus on meaning. Earl Stevick (1976) reports on a number of psycholinguistic experiments which have shown that the more cognitive effort is produced by the student in processing linguistic material (e.g. a list of nouns to memorize) the longer he can re-

tain it in his memory. This effort he calls 'complex processing' and implies that 'meaningful context' aids in the learning of sentences because it 'permits more complex processing (Stevick 1976:30)'. For instance, a student who is required to put lexical items into sentences of his invention will retain the items in his memory longer than the one who is merely asked to memorize the list. In the semantic network model, 'meaningful contexts' on every level serve as matrices for learning semantic concepts and aid in retaining them.

The third aspect of the model which aids memory and recall is the form-meaning complex and the emphasis on its integrity. Miller (1978:60), in discussing the difficulties of retrieving linguistic concepts from the memory for use in rapid, spontaneous speech, says this:

> Phonological access enables a listener to understand what he hears spoken. But how is a speaker able to gain access to a word he may want to utter, a word whose phonological shape remains as yet unrealized? It is generally assumed that the process is reversible: it is possible to go from other knowledge to the sound as well as from the sound to other knowledge. That is to say, there must be some second mode of access, by way of the meaning of a word, that enables a speaker to find words to express his ideas and intentions and so to realize them acoustically.

Beekman and Callow (1979:1) speak of 'form-meaning reciprocity' which means that either the form is retrievable through the meaning or conversely, the meaning is retrievable through the form. It is a two-way street in the competent speaker.

CONCLUSIONS

I have tried in this paper to formulate, in sketchy outline, a model which will fit the needs of a language learner who is motivated to use language as a means of getting into a foreign culture. The semantic network model, I feel, makes a significant contribution to this need. It puts culture forward as the ultimate matrix for language learning and uses the phonological, grammatical and the referential hierarchies as tools for teaching any aspect of language in semantic contexts. The learning of lexicon by the use of semantic networks, according to the theory, contributes to lexical stability and mobility, helping the student become competent in linguistic/situational contexts which are potentially useful to him in gaining entrance into the culture which interests him.

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